SELF-EFFICACY AND ENGLISH LEARNERS IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS CLASSROOM

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Abstract

While there have been many studies conducted measuring self-efficacy for special needs learners, African-American students, and second language learners in other countries, few studies have looked at how self-efficacy may affect English Learners in the United States, specifically within Hispanic populations. This paper gives a brief overview of the research on self-efficacy as related to English learning, as well as the details of an attempt at measuring self-efficacy and achievement of Hispanic English language arts students at the high school level. Further research in this field is suggested.

Keywords: Achievement, English Language Arts, English Learner, Hispanic or Latino/a Students, Motivation, Self-concept, Self-efficacy

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When I first began researching multicultural education, I was alarmed to discover the high drop-out rates among Hispanic[1] students nationally (NCES, 2010). Then, watching my own high school English language arts students from various backgrounds struggle with coursework and standardized testing, I wondered what more I could do to help them. I decided to design a study of self-efficacy, that is, how students view their potential for success and their ability to bring about that success, a relatively newer approach to education research that began in the 1980s and 1990s (Bandura, 1982). Most of these studies in self-efficacy and language have focused on the self-efficacy of special education students, learners of English as a second language in other countries, or elementary and high school reading and writing for students in general. To date, the research that compares high school students' self-efficacy with achievement in English for specific ethnicities has focused on African-American students; therefore I find a critical gap remains in the research that studies Hispanic populations, both as native speakers of English and as English learners. I hope that by having a better understanding of students' feelings of self-efficacy toward English, we as teachers can help to improve our students'ability to feel able to succeed and improve their English language arts skills, with the ultimate goal of helping students to be more successful academically.

[1] For the purpose of this paper, the term Hispanic was chosen as that is the term students used in the survey to describe themselves. Similarly, students used the terms White or Caucasian and African-American to describe themselves, and so I will use those terms throughout the paper.

Self-efficacy

In recent years, self-efficacy studies have become the focus of psychologists and educators alike, as researchers have recognized the wide variety of factors that influence student learning and school success and the impact those factors have on a student's ability to feel able to learn, plan for learning, and reflect upon her own learning has on her academic success. This focus on self-efficacy has been the object of some ridicule in the popular media as a focus on self-esteem, but self-efficacy, or perceived self-efficacy, is commonly defined as personal beliefs about one's capabilities to organize and implement actions necessary to attain designated levels of performance (Bandura, 1982). In other words, perceived self-efficacy is how students view a particular subject, and how they feel they are able to perform within that subject as they make plans to learn and reflect on how well those plans worked for future efforts, which has a very real impact on their actual academic achievements in that subject.. It is not simply a matter of a person's self-esteem, or feeling about his self-worth as a whole—a whole host of factors can influence a person's perceived self-efficacy related to educational tasks that involve new material, including prior experiences with tasks, teacher feedback, peer feedback, and even choice of activities (Schunk, 1989).

Many of the early self-efficacy studies, including Schunk's work in the 1980s (Schunk, 1989), and those which have been carried on by numerous others in the 1990s and now in the twenty-first century, have dealt primarily with the perceived self-efficacy of variously labeled special education students. Recent studies on self-efficacy by Baird, Scott, Dearing, and Hamill(2009) and Klassen (2010), for example, have focused on

students with learning disabilities, showing that they commonly have more negative feelings of self-efficacy about themselves as students than general education students, which impacts their attitudes toward school, and their academic performance. Klassen's study, for instance, found that for both students with learning disabilities and those without, self-efficacy contributed "significantly" to the prediction of their end-of-term English grades after controlling for socio-economic status and gender. (He found that girls typically have higher self-efficacy rates for English skills than boys.) "In fact, for both groups, self-efficacy for self-regulated learning contributed almost as much to the prediction of English grade as reading ability" (Klassen, 2010, pg. 27). These types of studies have been instructive for the development of best practices in the classroom for special education students, such as teachers continually offering verbal encouragement and showcasing peer success. It follows then, that if minority students may also be more prone to negative feelings of self-efficacy in English classes, the same sorts of practices should be implemented in mainstream classrooms as well.

Other studies in the 1990s began looking at the more general relationships between self-efficacy and student achievement and attitudes toward reading. For example, Wigfield and Guthrie (1997) and Baker and Wigfield (1999) in particular found a strong correlation between self-efficacy and motivation for reading. Pajares, Britner, and Valiente (2000), in replicating studies by Elliot and Harackiewicz (1996) and Middleton and Midgley (1997), found that 7th and 8th grade students' self-efficacy was positively related to writing task goals, and negatively related to writing task avoidance.[2]

[2] This study also found that self-efficacy and science task performance were less closely correlated than writing task performance. Additionally, the researchers surmised that the previous findings by Elliot and

All of these studies have highlighted the important link between what students think they can accomplish and what they are actually able to achieve in reading and writing tasks for students in general, demonstrating the need for using strategies to boost students' sense of self-efficacy, especially with students at higher risk of developing negative self-efficacy.

As mentioned previously, the available research focusing on minority students and self-efficacy focuses on African-American students, and the results are telling. The Pajares, Britner, and Valiente (2000) and Middleton and Midgley (1997) studies mentioned above also compared results between African-American and White students. Other African American self-efficacy studies include Witherspoon, Speight, & Thomas (1997) which compared racial identity and self-efficacy, Grantham and Ford (2003) which looked more specifically at gifted African-American students, and Saunders, Davis, Williams, & Williams (2004) which focused on gender differences within African-Americans in the relationship between self-efficacy and achievement, just to name a few. All of these studies showed significant correlations between perceived self-efficacy and achievement for English classes, but they also showed a correlation between self-efficacy of students and feelings of fitting into the culture of the school, as well as a correlation between achievement and academic support by peers and family. These studies indicate the need for minority students to feel accepted by the greater culture of the community, and to feel that academics is a valued part of the culture, in order to feel able to achieve academically themselves.

Harackiewicz (1996) and Middleton and Midgley (1997), which showed very little correlation between self-efficacy and task performance in sixth graders may have been due to their younger age.

However, at the time of this study, I have found no other research which have been conducted considering the role of self-efficacy for Hispanic students, another academically struggling demographic. Because Hispanic students in particular are statistically far less likely to graduate from high school or go to college than other students, even other minority students, studies relating self-efficacy are of particular importance. In fact, according to the U.S. Department of Education, over 18% of Hispanic students dropped out of high school in 2008, compared to almost 10% of Black Americans, 4.8% of White Americans, and only 4.4% of Asian Americans. The only other demographic close to the Hispanic drop-out rate was for American Indians, at 14.6% (NCES, 2010).

Self-efficacy and Second Language Learning

Although many Hispanic students speak English as their native language, it is true that language is often a barrier for many Hispanic students who speak one language at home and with their peers, but are expected to perform academically in English alone. However, while it may be the case that many Hispanic students struggle because they are English Learners (formerly called ESL, ENL, or ELL students), that does not explain the disparities in other groups' high school drop-out rates. For example, Asian American students face similar language barriers, and have a low drop-out rate, while American Indian students typically are English speakers and face the second-highest drop-out rate, after Hispanic students[3].

[3] Most American Indians, however, are not considered proficient in Standard American English. Some do speak a Native language as their first language, but it is estimated that about two-thirds use "Indian

In addition to the special needs and African-American studies in self-efficacy already mentioned, a large body of the work on self-efficacy has focused on second language students around the world. One of the first of these studies, conducted by Pierson, Fu, & Lee in 1980, studied self-efficacy and achievement for students studying English in Hong Kong. This study, which compared a survey of attitudes and a scale of stereotypes toward English with a cloze procedure to measure English competency, showed that self-efficacy was a strong indicator for attainment in English. Other studies of interest include: Korean graduate students' self-efficacy and English achievement (Roger, 2010), the relationship between Chinese students learning German and their self-concepts (Hennig, 2010), in addition to several recent studies of heritage language learning (Oriyama, 2010; Otcu, 2010; Wong & Xiao, 2010; Dressler, 2010). These studies indicate the extent to which language learning forms self-concept at the same time that self-efficacy enables learning. In other words, all of these studies, regardless of the language, showed that as a student succeeds in learning a new language, she not only feels more positively toward her ability to do well in studying that language, but she also forms a stronger personal connection to the culture surrounding that language. The implication for Hispanic students learning in a culture whose language is predominately English is that the more positive feelings of self-efficacy toward English they have, the better they will be able to achieve academically, and the more they will feel a part of the

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English," which is a sort of pidgin language using the vocabulary of English and grammatical structures of the ancestral language (Leap, 1993). However, for the sake of this comparison, it could be argued that these American Indian populations use more English than Hispanic populations at home (75% of Hispanic people use Spanish as their first language in the United States, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.) The effects of American Indian self-efficacy on academic achievement is another avenue of possible study.

community of English speakers in general. Similarly, offering heritage Spanish classes for these students is of equal importance, since these classes often help students by providing positive academic reinforcement within their first language, and therefore can help to boost their feelings of self-efficacy toward academics and feelings of acceptance within the school community in general.

Several studies by Wentzel and her colleagues, for example, show a strong correlation between social factors and self-efficacy (Wentzel, 1996 and Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998), which reinforces the fact that school and classroom environments are key to student success. A new study by Graham (2011), illustrates how listening skills are also of key importance to English Learners in particular for self-efficacy in English learning, and consequently, success in English language arts classes. Further, DelliCarpini (2010) discusses how teachers who are using multicultural educational strategies are successfully increasing self-efficacy, and subsequently having success in increasing achievement for their English Learner students.

Cultural Capital

The idea that a student's background could be favored more or less by the controlling institution (in this case, school), is that student's "cultural capital," according to French psychologist Pierre Bourdieu (1977). It could be argued that part of the problem for Hispanic/Latino students is that teachers and administrators are not treating them as able to learn at the same level as other students with more cultural capital (usually, in the United States, White students who use Standard English), inevitably

impacting their feelings of self-efficacy and ability to achieve academically as their cultural capital is not privileged by American school structures and expectations. Unfortunately, on the whole, this mismatch in expectations is not sufficiently recognized Thirty years ago, Yale professor Paul DiMaggio found a direct correlation between cultural capital and student achievement, regardless of socio-economic status. He stated, "Teachers, it is argued, communicate more easily with students who participate in elite status cultures, give them more attention and special assistance, and perceive them as more intelligent or gifted than students who lack cultural capital" (DiMaggio, 1982, pg. 190). Therefore, the students' own perception of their ability is not the issue—but rather, how the teacher perceives the students'abilities. As mentioned before, Schunk discusses a clear connection between students'interactions with their teachers and their feelings of self-efficacy. Is it possible that Hispanic students drop out because their schools make them believe they are not capable of succeeding?

While this argument is compelling, issues surrounding the drop-out rates of Hispanic students are incredibly complex, as cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic issues combine to hinder academic success for many students. In regard to culture in particular, the group labeled "Hispanic" by the United States government could include people with diverse cultures and backgrounds whose countries of origin span continents: North American peoples from Mexico or Puerto Rico; Central American peoples from Nicaragua or Costa Rica; South American peoples from Venezuela or Argentina, just to name a few. Taking into consideration subgroups within countries and, of course, individual differences from personal experiences, it is quite impossible to assume that a

student whose ethnic background hails from Cuba would choose to either continue or drop out of school for the same reasons as a student from Peru. However, studies suggest that how students and their cultures are treated (or ignored) in the classroom is significant. Although many of the studies on culturally responsive pedagogy have focused on African-American groups, new studies are slowly emerging concerning Hispanic/Latino groups as well.

Irizarry (2007), an education professor specializing in curriculum and instruction who studied the relationship between Hispanic students and culturally responsive education, discussed the strengths and weaknesses of the culturally responsive approach in practice. First, he explains the importance of teaching to diverse learning styles and affirming students' cultures. However, he also warns, "since identities are shaped by the context in which they are developed and are constantly being renegotiated, it is extremely difficult to pre-package one set of academic strategies that are likely to work with all members of a cultural group" (pg. 23). What this means, then, is a student who appears to be from a particular culture or background may identify differently, and individuals with similar backgrounds will have still have individual struggles and preferences educationally. However, practices in which the teacher purposefully incorporates elements of students' cultures into instruction have been found to be effective, in addition to discussing openly and respectfully discussing culture and background with students (Darling-Hammond, Dilworth, and Bullmaster, 1996).

It may also be easy to assume that perhaps parents from Hispanic cultures do not value education, and perhaps that is why their children are not academically successful

and are more likely to drop out early. However, Spera, Wentzel, and Matto (2010) found that parents across all minority groups tend to have high aspirations for their children's education, regardless of their own level of education. The problem with low-achieving students then, is probably less the families' attitudes toward school, than how the school as a whole, and the teachers in particular, respond to minority students, regardless of their actual language ability.

Research Questions

Given the history of self-efficacy research and the importance of discovering the relationship between self-efficacy and minority and EL students, this study explores how Hispanic students tend to view themselves as students in English classes, and whether there is a correlation between their perceived self-efficacy and actual achievement in English classrooms. For the purpose of this project, achievement will be defined as receiving high grades and test scores on the Indiana English End-of-Course Assessments, and SAT/ACT scores as reported by the students, as well as writing skill demonstrated by a writing sample. This study focuses on achievement in English classes because they are required all four years in high school and are necessary for graduation. Also, because good communication skills are fundamental to all other subjects, students who struggle in English tend to struggle in other areas as well, and are therefore more likely to lose academic credits, fail the state graduation tests, and drop out of school before graduating. As outlined previously, the research on student self-efficacy concludes that how a student views herself as a student also directly impacts her academic success. Conversely,

students who have negative self-efficacy for English classes may also have low achievement. It would be difficult to determine a causal relationship between the two, so the relationship would best be described as reciprocal. For the purpose of this study, self-efficacy will be determined by how well students feel their grades and standardized test scores reflect their perceived ability to do well in English class, as well as how their achievement compares to more general attitudes toward English class and specific English class activities.

With these issues in mind, some of the questions driving this project are: What is the relationship between self-efficacy and success in the high school English Language Arts classroom? Is there a significant difference in self-efficacy and success for Hispanic students compared to Caucasian students? And is there a difference between native and non-native speakers of English within the Hispanic demographic?

Method

Context

The school used for this survey is in a small, Midwestern town with around 1800 high school students. More than half of the student population qualifies for free and reduced lunch, and around one-third of students are of Hispanic ethnic origin. It is an average-sized American city, with a Hispanic population who has mostly immigrated during the past thirty years, and a continuing influx of immigrants from around the globe. Some of these immigrants enter the country legally, some not, and most of the Hispanic residents in this region come from just a few specific areas of Mexico, although there are

also those Hispanic students who come from Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, or Central and South American countries. For the purpose of this study, students self-identified themselves as Hispanic and identified their preferred language, but were not asked to provide more specific background information as to their legal status or country of origin.

Survey

A thirty question survey was created to assess how students feel about English Language Arts, the kinds of literacy activities they engage in, how they write, and how these responses correlate to their demographics information, if at all (see Appendix). The first section, questions 1-15, used a scale from 1 to 5 to measure students' attitudes toward school, various aspects of the English Language Arts classes and curricula, as well as grades and standardized test scores in the English Language Arts. These questions were designed to measure students' feelings of acceptance within the community, school, and by teachers, as well as their feelings of perceived self-efficacy toward particular English class activities and toward English classes in general. The second section asked five questions about the kinds of reading and writing that students do outside of their school day and what language they use for those activities. These questions were designed to measure how students use English in their everyday lives outside of the classroom, and compare those results to their feeling of self-efficacy and attitudes toward English class. The third section asked students to write a short writing sample describing a memorable day in an English Language Arts class. The purpose of the essay was to

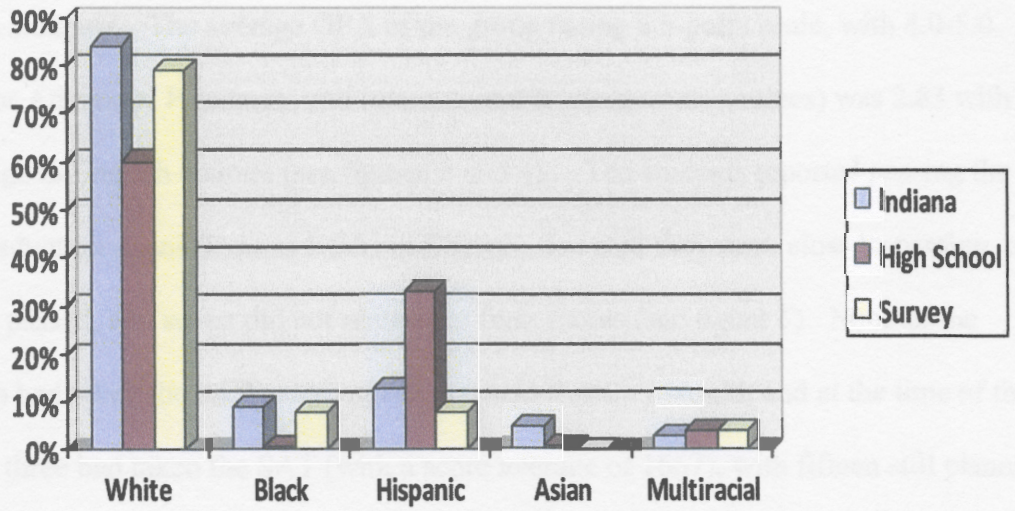
provide another medium for analyzing attitudes toward English classes and the students' abilities in English written expression. The final section asked for basic student demographic information about race/ethnicity, language, free-and-reduced lunch status, GPA, grades, and standardized test scores.

Four hundred twenty-five surveys were printed with an informational cover letter and consent form in both English and Spanish at a seventh-grade reading level (see appendix). The Spanish translation of the letter and the consent form were prepared by the High School translators in the ENL department, as is normal procedure for parent communications. The surveys and survey presentation scripts were distributed through the students' homeroom (SRT) classes. The teachers read the script informing students of the purpose and directions for the summary. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. No grades or other incentives were attached to the completion of the survey. Students who did not wish to participate were instructed to leave their forms blank in a stack near the door on their way out of class. SRT teachers could then redistribute these surveys for students who were absent or reconsidered participation in the study. Those students who chose to participate took both forms home, signed the consent and had the consent form signed by the parent, and returned the packet to the SRT teacher. The teacher then mailed the materials to Dr.Gwendolyn Mettetal, my IUSB faculty advisor, where the consent forms were separated from the surveys. The surveys were then returned to me for analysis.

Data Analysis

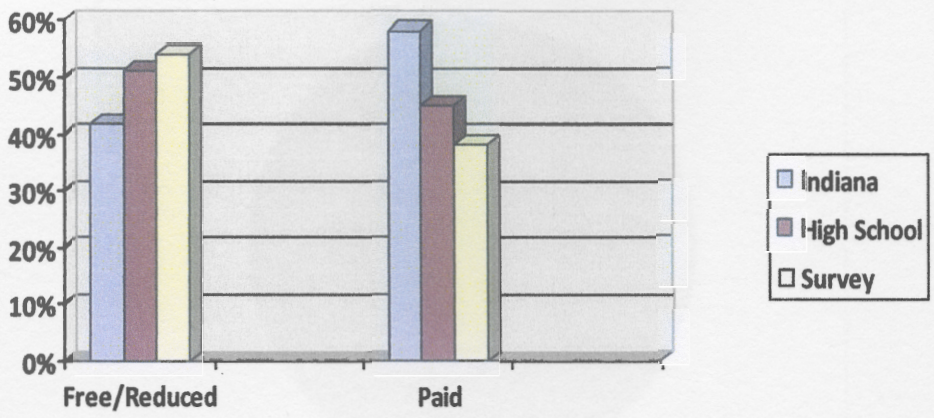
Unfortunately, only twenty-four students returned their surveys during this study. The demographics section of the survey showed that a majority of the students who completed the survey were White, spoke English, and qualified for free and reduced lunch, which does not reflect exactly the overall state or high school demographics (see figures 1 and 2). None of these students completed the high school ENL program, so comparing responses from students who have and have not learned English as a second language at the high school as originally hoped was impossible.

Figure 1: Population by Race[4]



[4] Statistics taken from U.S. Census Bureau "Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010" and school website

Figure 2: Free/Reduced Lunch Rates[5]



On average, the students who responded to the survey were slightly above average students. The average GPA of the group (using a 5-point scale, with 4.0-5.0 given for Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate courses) was 2.83 with a B average in English courses (see figures 3 and 4). Ten students reported passing the state graduation exam (Indiana ECA) in English, five said they were close to passing, but had not passed, and seven did not remember their scores (see figure 5). None of the students had taken the ACT, although eleven said that they would, and at the time of the survey, three had taken the SAT (with a score average of 1667), with fifteen still planning to take the test in the spring.

[5] Statistics taken from Kids Count Data Center "Indiana % of Students Receiving Free or Reduced Price Lunch" and school website

Figure 3: Student Grade Point Averages

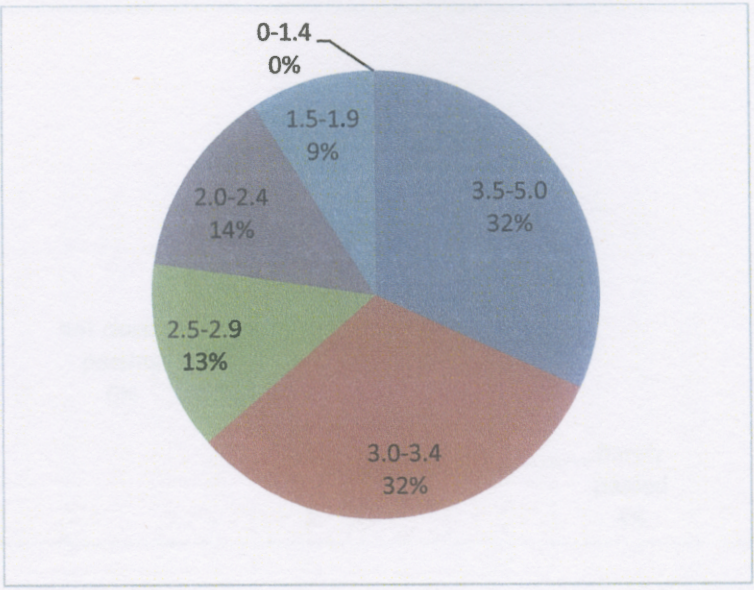


Figure 4: Student Grades in English

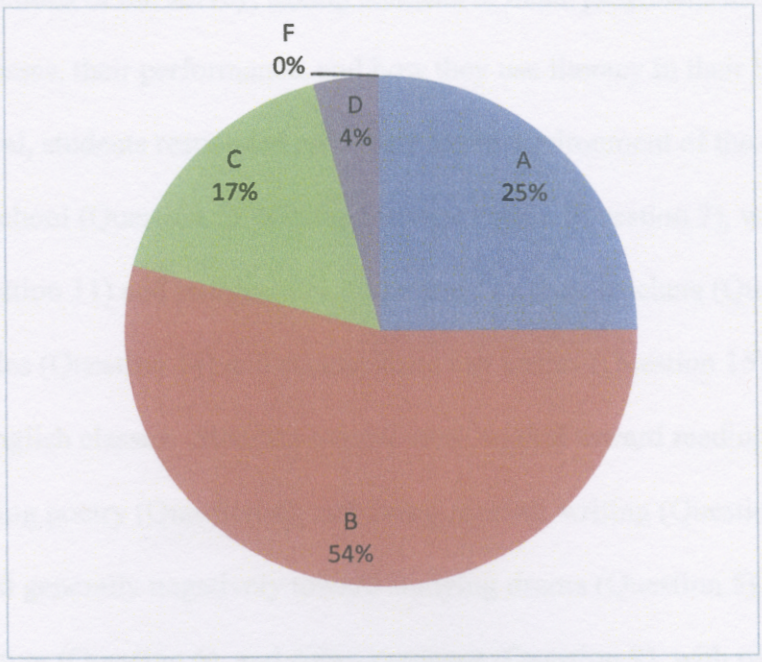
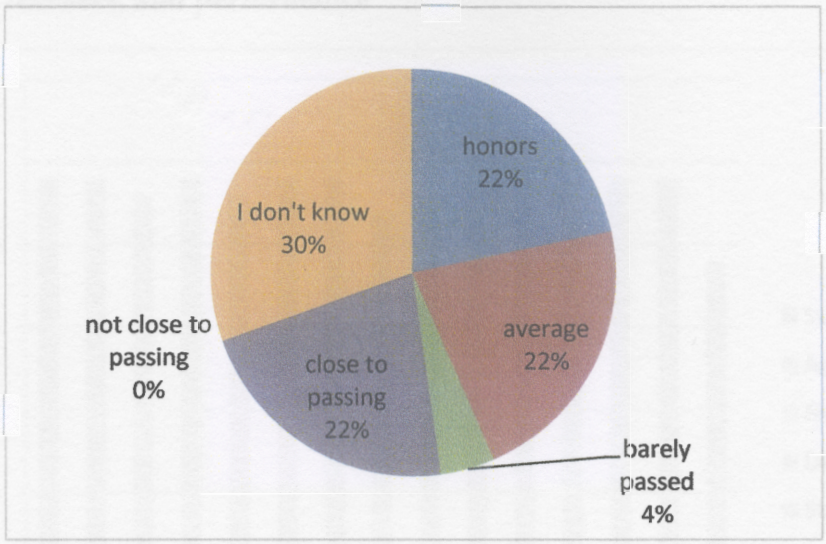
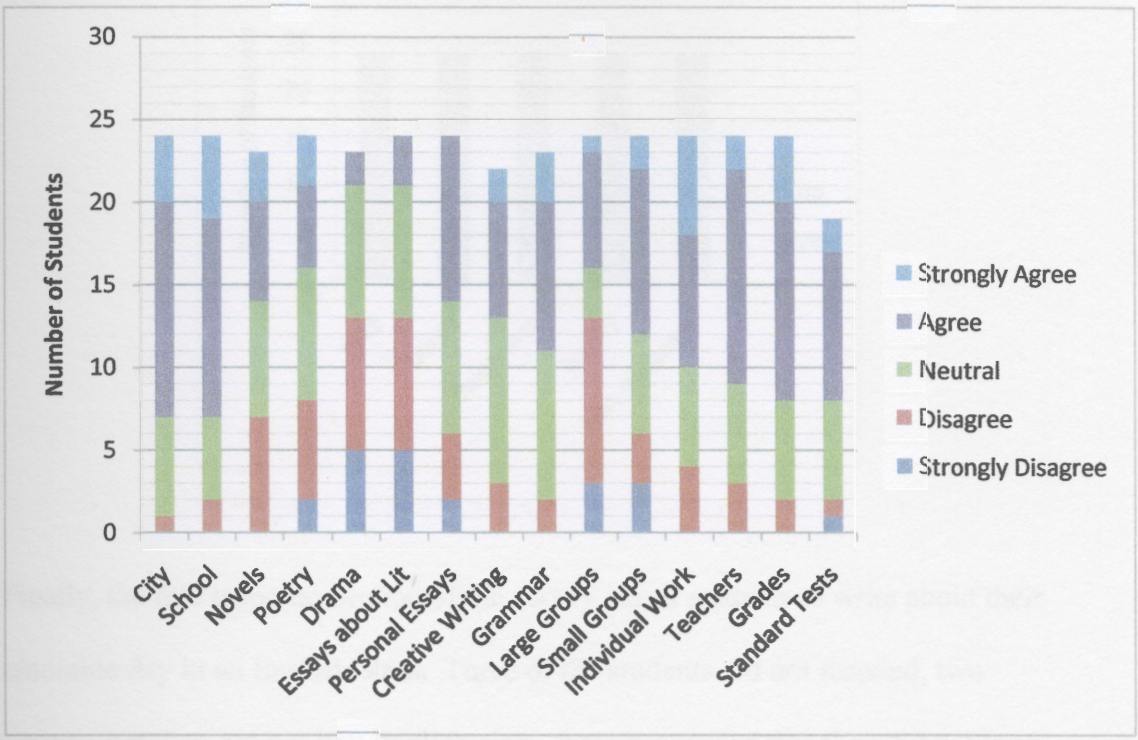


Figure 5: Student English Graduation Exam Scores



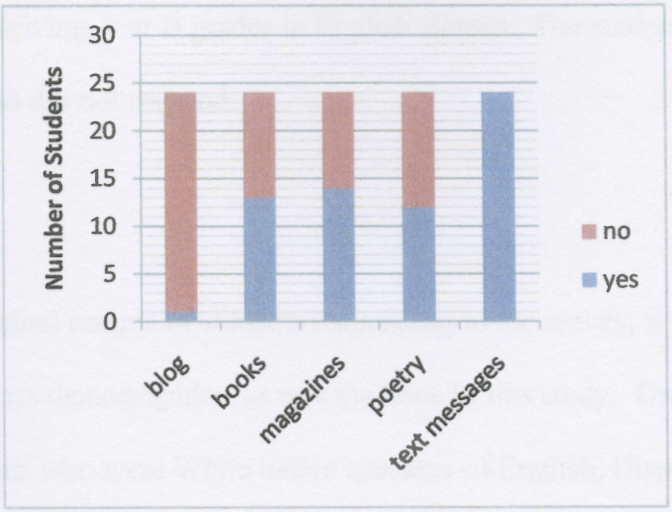
The limited number of responses also make comparisons between various racial groups more difficult, however some general trends among all students emerge within the first and second sections of the survey, asking students to make judgments about the high school, English classes, their performance, and how they use literacy in their lives outside of school. In general, students responded positively to the environment of the city (Question 1) and school (Question 2), writing personal essays (Question 7), working in small groups (Question 11) and individually (Question 12), their teachers (Question 13), and how their grades (Question 14) and standardized test scores (Question 15) reflect their abilities in English classes. Students overall were neutral toward reading novels (Question 3), reading poetry (Question 4), and doing creative writing (Question 8). Students responded generally negatively toward studying drama (Question 5), writing essays about literature (Question 6), and doing grammar (Question 9), with rather split responses about large group work (Question10) (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Student level of agreement with positive statements about the city, school, English classes, teachers, and performance



The section of the survey that asked students about their regular literacy activities showed that many students read and write frequently outside of the classroom. While only one student reported writing a blog, more than half reported reading books or magazines, half write poetry, and all of the students (not surprisingly) reported using text messaging (see figure 7). Students reported doing all of these activities in English, although one student reported reading magazines in both English and Spanish, and five students reported sending text messages in both English and Spanish, though they did not specify the amount of Spanish used.

Figure 7: Literacy Activities Outside of the Classroom



Finally, the free response section of the survey asked students to write about their most memorable day in an English class. Three of the students did not respond, two students wrote that they did not like English class, three responded that they did not have a memorable day, and three wrote about moments not specifically related to instuction, such as times when the teacher shared personal information or hosted a pizza party. The other fifteen discussed specific instructional activities or units of study that stood out for them. One student described a poetry project, another giving persuasive speeches, a third doing creative writing. Two students wrote about times when students were asked to share their writing with the class. Four students discussed reading books in class, with *The House on Mango Street* and *Of Mice and Men* being mentioned specifically. Three students said their most memorable days were when teachers had students write and perform skits from Shakespearean plays. (*Twelfth Night, A Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Hamlet* were all mentioned.) The vast majority of the responses were well-written,

with complete sentences and accurate spelling and grammar, consistent with the students' reports of generally receiving A or B grades in English classes. The student who reported receiving a D in English did not respond.

Conclusions

With such a limited sample of students responding to the survey, it is difficult to make comparisons across demographics, as was the hope of this study. Originally, only the responses of students who were White native speakers of English, Hispanic native speakers of English, and Hispanic English Learners would have been kept and analyzed across groups for similarities, lending some insight into the correlation between self-efficacy, achievement, and literacy in those subgroups. However, no Hispanic English Learners responded to the survey, and the number of Hispanic speakers of English who did respond is too few to make claims about a large group of students responsibly.

Additionally, while the questions on the survey gave a good measure of students' attitudes toward English class and common English class activities, there were not enough questions to determine self-efficacy directly. In addition to the questions asking students to agree or agree with the statements "My grades in my English Language Arts classes are pretty accurate—they show how I feel I can do" and "My test scores (ECA, ACT, SAT) were pretty accurate—they show how I feel I can do,"
subsequent surveys should include statements such as "I feel capable of earning high grades in English class," and "I feel capable of doing well on English standardized tests." Such statements may give researchers a clearer understanding of the students' self-

efficacy for English, and could be compared to the previous statements. More general questions asking students to agree with statements such as, "I feel like I'm a good student," of "My teachers would say I'm a good student," would provide better insight into how students view their self-efficacies Students also could be asked about their self-efficacy in other subject areas, which could be compared to results from English to see the correlation between feelings of self-efficacy and English and overall academic progress.

That being said, there are some overall trends from this survey that are of interest and could inform general teaching practices in English for this school, and perhaps English teachers in general. Some of the trends in responses would not be surprising to most English teachers: students tend to dislike doing grammar exercises and they prefer creative writing to composing literary analysis essays. All who responded text message, and many of them read magazines or online articles. However, I believe many teachers would be surprised to realize how many of their students enjoy studying poetry and composing their own. Doing drama was more negatively received than writing literary analysis and much less favorable than doing grammar exercises, and more students are reading books independently than we might have guessed. Interestingly, though drama was viewed negatively overall, three students pointed out drama exercises as being a memorable part of their English school experience.

In terms of feelings of self-efficacy toward English overall, it appears that in this group, students who tend to have positive feelings toward English class did tend to have academic success in English, as most of the students who responded reported that their

grades and standardized scores did reflect their ability, and these students had high English grades and standardized test scores.. Unfortunately, as previously mentioned, this finding results from a very small sample size which may not represent the population as a whole, and ultimately cannot be disaggregated between demographics.

However, the lack of useable data to determine the relationship of self-efficacy and English language arts achievement for Hispanic and Hispanic English Learner students in this study does not negate the necessity of that data for future studies. Further study of self-efficacy and Hispanic populations may help educators to develop more strategies to improve their students' success in English language arts classes specifically, and toward greater academic achievement overall. . With increased awareness of the importance of self-efficacy and developing these strategies in culturally responsive ways, it is my hope that teachers can continue closing the achievement gap between minority students and their classmates.

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Appendix

February 15, 2011

Dear Parent and Goshen High School Junior,

As you may know, I have been an English and French teacher at Goshen High School (GHS) for five years. I am also currently working on my Master's degree at IUSB. For my final thesis project, I am studying students' attitudes toward English class. I hope to find out some reasons why students may not do as well in English classes and how to help those students to do better. As part of this project, I am inviting all Goshen High School Juniors to participate in a study. I will be looking at the relationship between students' attitudes toward English Language Arts classes and their performance. The data I collect may also be compared for similarities and differences between diverse groups of students.

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Choosing not to participate will not affect your child's grades or status at GHS.

Please review the attached Informed Consent form and survey. If you agree to allow your child to participate sign the form and then have your child review both the consent document and the survey. If you both agree about their participation, you and your child should sign the consent form and then your child can complete the survey. The survey should only take 10-15 minutes to complete, and parent input is not necessary. The completed surveys should be returned to your child's SRT teacher, who will send the forms directly to my IUSB professor, Dr. Gwynn Mettetal. Dr. Mettetal will separate the forms and black out any identifying information before giving me the surveys. Your child's name should not appear anywhere on the survey, and I will not make any effort to match data with individuals.

If you have any questions about this survey, please feel free to contact my IUSB professor, Dr. Mettetal, at gmettetal@iusb.edu or (574) 520-4507. For help with Spanish translation, contact Mrs. Lepe at the GHS ENL department, who can arrange a translator for you.

Thank you in advance for helping with my project!

Sincerely,

Melissa Bebout

English and French teacher

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Student Self-Efficacy and Achievement in the English Classroom

The purpose of this research study is to examine the relationship between a student's attitude toward English classes and the student's performance in those classes. Data collected may also be compared between diverse groups of students. This study is being conducted as part of my thesis project for my Master's in Liberal Studies at IUSB.

INFORMATION

In this study, students are asked to complete a brief survey (attached) that should take 10-15 minutes to complete. The survey will ask them questions about how they like Goshen High School (GHS) in general and how they like their English classes specifically. They will also be asked some general demographic questions such as ethnicity, GPA, etc. All 425 juniors at GHS are being invited to participate.

RISKS

I do not anticipate any risk associated with the study.

BENEFITS

While there is no direct benefit from agreeing to allow your child to participate in my study; it is anticipated that the information will add to our understanding of student attitude and achievement, which could help educators plan better curriculum and classroom policies in the future.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Signed consent forms and surveys will be sent from the SRT teacher directly to my IUSB professor, so that I will not know who participated. My IUSB professor will separate the consent form from the survey, black out any identifying information, and give me just the survey, so that I will not know the identity of any student. The consent forms will be kept in a locked file by my professor. No names or identifying information will be used in reports or graphs.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures you may contact the researcher, Melissa Bebout, by phone at 574-533-8651 x2457, and by email at mail to: mbebout@goshenschools.org. You may also contact the faculty sponsor, Dr. Gwynn Mettetal, by phone at 574-520-4507 or by email at gmetteta@iusb.edu. For Spanish translation, contact the GHS ENL department, who can arrange correspondence translation.

If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact the Indiana University South Bend Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Research Subjects, 1700 Mishawaka Ave., A247, South Bend, IN 46634, 574-520-4181, by e-mail at sbirb@iusb.edu.

PARTICIPATION

Your decision to allow your child to participate in the study is voluntary. You may withdraw your permission at any time before the surveys are submitted to IUSB. Since the surveys will not have identifiers after that point it will not be possible to withdraw from the study.

CONSENT

I have read this form and received a copy. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to permit my child to participate in this study.

Parent and/or Legal Guardian Signature_____ Date _____

I have read this form and received a copy. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this study.

Student's signature_____

Date_____

Consent form date: February 15, 2011

INDIANA UNIVERSITY SOUTH BEND

Student Self-Efficacy and Achievement in the English Classroom

For the following statements, please respond on a scale from 1-5 with 1 for strongly agree and 5 strongly disagree, or N/A, which means that this statement does not apply to me.

1. I feel welcome and part of the Goshen community.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

2. I feel welcome and part of Goshen High School.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

3. I like reading and discussing novels in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

4. I like reading and discussing poetry in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

5. I like reading and discussing or performing drama and plays in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

6. I like writing essays about literature in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

7. I like writing essays about other topics (besides literature) in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

8. I like doing creative writing in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

9. I like doing grammar practice exercises in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

10. I usually participate in large class discussions in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

11. I like small group discussions in English class.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

12. I like working by myself in English class most of the time.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

13. I feel like the level of instruction and the way the teachers teach at GHS meet my needs as an English Language Arts student.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

14. My grades in my English Language Arts classes are pretty accurate—they show how I feel I can do.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

15. My test scores (ECA, ACT, SAT) were pretty accurate—they show how I feel I can do.

1-Strongly Agree ☺ 2- Agree 3- Neutral 4- Disagree 5- Strongly Disagree ☹ N/A

1. Do you have a blog? YES NO **If yes, in what language(s)?** _____

2. Do you read books for fun? YES NO **If yes, in what language(s)?** _____

3. Do you read magazines or blogs? YES NO **If yes, in what language(s)?** _____

4. Do you like to write poems? YES NO **If yes, in what language(s)?** _____

5. Do you like to text message? YES NO **If yes, in what language(s)?**_____

Please tell me a little more about the most memorable day you had in English class at Goshen.

What happened? Why do you remember it?

1. What race or ethnicity do you consider yourself?

_____

2. What is your primary language, and from what country? (ex. American English)

_____

3. If English is not your primary language, have you been in the ENL program at GHS? YES NO **If yes, what level are you?** _____

4. Do you qualify for free and reduced lunch? YES NO I DON'T KNOW

5. What is your overall GPA?

0 -1.49 1.50 – 1.9 2.0 – 2.49 2.50 – 2.99 3.00 – 3.49 3.50 – 4.00

6. What grades do you normally get in English classes, on average? A B C D F

7. In Goshen, we took the English ECA test last May during exam week and received those scores at the beginning of this year. To the best of your memory, did you pass the English ECA last May?

a. Yes, with honors.

b. Yes, with an average score.

c. Yes, but barely.

d. No, but I was close.

e. No, I wasn't really close to passing.

f. I don't remember how I did.

g. I did not take the test

8. If you have taken the ACT, what was your score?

a. Score: _____

Language arts score: _____

b. I do not remember my score.

c. I plan to take the test in the future.

d. I do not plan to take the test.

9. If you have taken the SAT, what was your overall score?

a. Score: _____

Written score: _____

Verbal score: _____

b. I do not remember my score.

c. I plan to take the test in the future.

d. I do not plan to take the test.